

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown below. The status of the claims after amendment will be as follows.

Claims 1 - 6 (cancelled)

7. (withdrawn - currently amended) A reflow furnace comprising a preheating zone, a main heating zone, and a heater for blowing hot air as claimed in claim 11 disposed in each zone, ~~each heater having a perforated plate having a plurality of discharge holes through which hot air can be discharged from the~~ heater, wherein the total area of the discharge holes per unit area in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the main heating zone is 1.5 - 5 times the total area of the discharge holes per unit area in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the preheating zone.

8. (withdrawn) A reflow furnace as claimed in claim 7 wherein the number of discharge holes formed per unit area in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the main heating zone is the same as the number of discharge holes per unit area in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the preheating zone, and the diameter of the discharge holes in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the main heating zone is larger than the diameter of the discharge holes in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the preheating zone.

9. (withdrawn) A reflow furnace as claimed in claim 7 wherein the diameter of the discharge holes in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the main heating zone is the same as the diameter of the discharge holes in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the preheating zone, and the number of discharge holes per unit area in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the main heating zone is larger than the number of discharge holes per unit area in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the preheating zone.

10. (withdrawn) A reflow furnace as claimed in claim 7 wherein the number of discharge holes per unit area in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the main heating zone is larger than the number of discharge holes per unit area in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the preheating zone, and the diameter of the discharge holes in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the main heating zone is larger than the diameter of the discharge holes in the perforated plate of the heater installed in the preheating zone.

11. (previously presented) A heater for blowing hot air comprising a box-shaped body, an electric heater disposed inside the body, two partitions which divide an interior of the body into a suction chamber and discharge chambers on opposite sides of the suction chamber, the partitions sloping towards each other at an upper end of the suction chamber to reduce a width of the suction chamber, each partition having an opening which connects

the suction chamber with one of the discharge chambers, and a blower installed in a lower portion of the suction chamber, an upper end of each discharge chamber having a perforated plate having discharge holes formed therein.

12. (previously presented) A heater as claimed in claim 11 including a separate perforated plate for each discharge chamber.

13. (previously presented) A heater as claimed in claim 12 wherein each perforated plate is coated with a black ceramic.

14. (previously presented) A heater as claimed in claim 11 including a suction opening formed in the upper end of the body and communicating with the suction chamber, wherein the area of the suction opening is smaller than the area of the upper end of each discharge chamber.

15. (new) A heater for blowing hot air comprising a box-shaped body having a first end and a second end, a suction chamber disposed inside the body and two discharge chambers disposed inside the body on opposite sides of the suction chamber, an inlet at the first end of the body communicating with the suction chamber and two outlets at the first end of the body each communicating with one of the discharge chambers, a total area of the outlets being larger than an area of the inlet, two partitions disposed on opposite sides of the suction chamber and each separating the suction chamber from one of the discharge

chambers and sloping towards each other so that the flow area of the suction chamber decreases towards the inlet, openings which each connect the suction chamber with one of the discharge chambers, a blower installed in the body, a heater disposed in the body on a flow path between the blower and the suction inlet, and a perforated plate having discharge holes formed therein provided at each of the discharge outlets.

16. (new) A heater as claimed in claim 15 including a plate which extends between the partitions between the blower and the heater and has an inlet for the blower formed therein.

17. (new) A heater as claimed in claim 15 wherein the sloping of the partitions towards each other increases a flow area of each discharge chamber towards the first end of the body.

18. (new) A heater as claimed in claim 15 wherein each partition includes a portion extending parallel to the other partition and a portion sloping towards the other partition.